

THE *CRITO*

Background and Context...

Socrates' trial and Apology

- » The mission, method and 'bad reputation' of Socrates
- » The formal charges: corrupting the youth and impiety

The guilty verdict and death sentence

- » Split decision, Socrates' (suicidal) 'counter penalty'
- » Socrates' steadfast commitment to "the most important things" (wisdom, truth, the best possible state of one's soul, etc)
- » Nothing can harm a good (virtuous, just, etc) man... *not even death!*

Crito's final attempt to persuade Socrates

- » Socrates is waiting in prison to die...the delay of execution
- » Crito comes to visit him in prison and tries to persuade him (one last time) that he *ought to escape* rather than stay and go through with the sentencing



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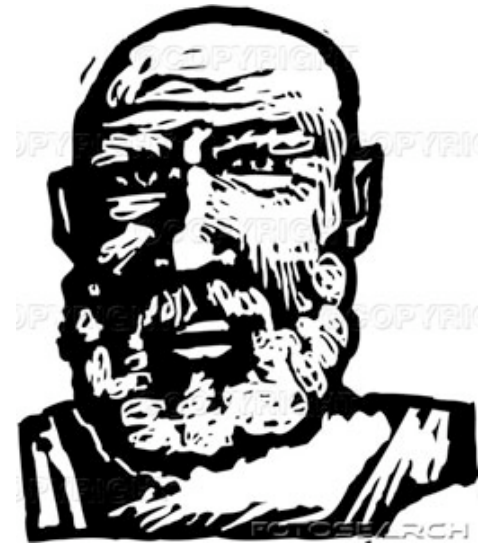
Crito's Arguments...

Crito's initial reasoning (44b-46d): If you do not escape, then you will be guilty of harming your...

- » Friends by depriving us of your presence
- » Friends by giving them a bad reputation in the eyes of the many
- » Self and others since you will be 'collaborating in injustice'
- » Family and especially your children

The character/nature of Crito's arguments...

- » Although some of Crito's reasons may seem legitimate, according to Socrates, they are all ultimately 'consequentialist' reasons and are therefore *NOT* the appropriate kind of considerations that ought to be appealed to
- » Why not, exactly?



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Some Socratic Principles...

The principles of 'justice' and 'non-retaliation'

- » One must never *willingly do wrong or return wrong for wrong*
- » “So then consider very carefully whether we have this view in common, and whether you agree, and let this be the basis of our deliberation, that neither to do wrong or to return a wrong is ever right, not even to injure in return for an injury received. Or do you disagree and do not share this view as a basis for discussion? I have held it for a long time and still hold it now.... (49d)

The principle of 'just agreements'

- » One should always *fulfill/uphold just agreements*
- » “...when one has come to an agreement that is just with someone, should one fulfill it or cheat on it?” (49e)

The principle of 'persuade or obey'

- » One's only options are to *either persuade or obey* (51c)



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Arguments of 'the Laws'...

The real question: would escaping be the 'just' thing to do?

- » *"You must do whatever the state, your country, commands, or must show her by persuasion what is really right, but that it is impious to use violence against either your father or your mother, and much more impious to use it against your country? What shall we reply to this, Crito, that the laws speak the truth, or not?" (51c)*
- » Socrates engages the 'personified' Laws of the city on this issue

The Law's first argument...

- » By escaping Socrates would be injuring (or harming) Athens and its laws. Therefore, by the principle of justice and the non-retaliation principle, Socrates should not escape

The Law's Second argument...

- » By escaping Socrates would be breaking (or not fulfilling) his just agreement/social contract with Athens and its laws. Therefore, by the just agreements principle, Socrates should not escape



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Some Conclusions...

So, the 'just' thing to do is *not* try to escape...

- » It seems like 'reason' has led us to this conclusion... Therefore, by the persuade or obey principle, Socrates must stay and die
- » Moreover, bad consequences would seem to follow from Socrates' escape

Is Socrates' guilty of some inconsistency?

- » In the *Apology*, Socrates implies that he *would disobey* any court order to stop philosophizing.
- » But in the *Crito*, makes a (very) strong case that one always ought to obey the laws of the state
- » A few possible resolutions: the 'persuade and obey' principle, a 'hierarchy of duties', etc.

